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THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY MUSSOLINI AT MILAN

ON THE BEGINNING OF THE XV. YEAR OF THE FASCIST REVOLUTION

1st November XV. Year of the Fascist Era
I. of the Empire

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I. of the Empire

The Duce's lofty words

In the presence of about half a million persons assembled in the largest square at Milan, Benito Mussolini, Founder of the Empire, delivered a speech on Sunday the 1st november, the XV. Year of the Fascist Era and on the conclusion of the celebrations for the XIV. Year of the Fascist Revolution.

The speech was broadcast by wireless practically all through the world. In elevated words the Head of the Government outlined the orders of march for Italy in the European and world policy.

The text of the speech is given below.

Fascist Italy and the other people of Europe

Blackshirts of Milan!

With the speech that I am going to deliver here before you and for which I request, and you will certainly give me, a few minutes of your attention, I intend to fix the position of Fascist Italy in so far as concerns her relations with the other people of Europe in this turbid and disquieting moment.

The high level of your political education consents my laying out before you those problems that

elsewhere are debated in the so-called Parliaments or at the end of so-called Democratic banquets.

I will be extremely succint, but I must add that each of my words has been meditated.

Making a clean slate of all illusions

If it is desired to clarify the European atmosphere it is necessary first of all to make a *tabula rasa* of all the illusions, of all the commonplaces and of all the conventional lies which still constitute the relics of the great shipwreck of Wilsonian idealology.

One of these illusions is aground: it is the illusion of disarmament. No one wants to be the first to disarm and general disarmament is impossible and absurd. And yet, when the Disarmament Conference met at Geneva, this question was in full function. It consisted in inflating bladders until they became mountains and on these mountains all the lime-light from the search-lights of world publicity is concentrated for a few days so that at a certain moment a diminuitive mouse emerges from them and it is lost in the labyrinths of a procedure that as regards fertile expedients is without precedent in history.

For us Fascists, accustomed to examine with cold eye the reality of life and of history, another illusion which we refute is that passing under the name of collective security. Collective security has never existed, does not exist, will never exist. A virile people brings about its own collective security on its frontiers and refuses to entrutst its destiny into the uncertain hands of third parties.

Another commonplace which must be refuted is indivisible peace. Indivisible peace could only have this meaning: indivisible war; but nations refuse, and rightly too, to fight for interests which do not concern them.

The League of the economic siege

The same League of Nations is based upon an absurdity which consists in the criterion of the absolute juridical parity of all the States, while States differ from each other, at least according to the point of view of their historical responsibility.

As far as the League of Nations is concerned the dilemma is placed in the clearest of terms: either to be renewed or to perish.

Since it is extremely difficult that it can be renewed, as far as we are concerned, it can calmly perish. In any case we have not forgotten, and we will not forget, that the League of Nations organized with methods of diabolical diligence, the iniquituous siege against the Italian people; attempted to starve this people in its concrete living reality of men, women and children; sought to break our military effort and the work of civilization that was beng carried out at about 4.000 kilometres away from the mother country. It was not successful, not because it did not wish to, but because it found facing it (The crowd shouts: « Il Duce ») the solid unity of the Italian people capa-

ble of all the sacrifices and also of waging war against fifty-two States in coalition.

The point

After all, to pursue a policy of peace it is not necessary to pass through the lobbies of the League of Nations. Here, O Comrades, I make what in navigation is called a point. After seventeen years of polemics, friction, misunderstandings and of questions left in abeyance, in Janauary 1935 agreements with France were concluded.

The agreements with France frozen

These agreements could and should have opened up a new era of really friendly relations between the two countries. But the Sanctions intervened. Naturally the friendship was frozen for the first time.

We were on the threshold of winter. Winter passed and spring came and with spring our triumphant victories. Sanctions continued to be applied with a truly meticulous rigor.

We had been at Addis Abeba for at least two months and still Sanctions continued. A classic example of the letter that kills the spirit, of formalism strangling the livng concrete reality of existence.

France still today holds its finger pointing to the age-yellowed archives of Geneva and says: The Empire of the very much former Lion of Judah is still alive. »

But beyond the registers of Geneva what is the message of the reality of our victory? That the empire of the Negus is more than dead.

It is plainly evident that so long as the French Government maintains towards us an attitude of waiting reserve we cannot but do likewise.

Good relations with Switzerland and Austria

One of the countries bordering with Italy and with which our relations have been, are and will always be extremely friendly, is Switzerland. A small country, but of the greatest importance both because of its ethnology and of the geographical position it occupies in the crossroads of Europe.

Following the agreements of the 11th July a new era was opened in the history of modern Austria. The agreements of the 11th July — hasty and misinformed commentators should make a note of this — were known to me and approved since the 5th June, and it is my conviction that these agreements have strengthened the statal structure of that country and have also further guaranteed its independence.

Justice for Hungary

Until justice is done to Hungary there can be no definitive systematisation of the interests in the Danubian Basin.

Hungary is truly the great mutilè: four million Magyars live beyond its present frontiers. In order

to follow the dictates of an abstract justice, another injustice has been committed, perhaps even greater.

The feelings of the Italian people towards the Magyar nation are based on the sincere recognition, which after all is reciprocal, of its military qualities, its courage and spirit of sacrifice.

Perhaps before long there will be a solemn occasion during which these feelings of the Italian people will be publicly and clamorously manifested.

Towards a concrete friendship with Yugoslavia

The fourth country bordering with Italy is Yugoslavia. During recent times the atmosphere between the two coutries greatly improved. You remember that two years ago in this same square I made a clear allusion of the possibilty that cordial friendly relations between the two countries could be established. I resume today this argument and I declare that by now necessary and sufficient conditions exist of a moral, political and economic character, to place on a new basis a concrete friendship, the relations between the two countries.

The entente with Germany

Besides the above which are the four countries bordering with Italy, a large country during these last few days earned extensive sympathy in the masses of the Italian people. I allude to Germany.

The meeting at Berlin resulted in an agreement

between the two countries on certain questions, some of which particularly interesting in these days. But these agreements, that have been included in special statements and were duly signed, this vertical line between Rome and Berlin is not a partition but rather an axis around which all the European States animated with the will of collaboration and peace, can also collaborate. Germany, although surrounded and solicited, did not adhere to Sanctions. By means of the agreement of the 11th July an element of dissension between Berlin and Rome disappeared and I remind you that even before the Berlin meeting, Germany had practically recognized the Empire of Rome.

We hoist the flag of anti-Bolshevism

It is not a matter for surpise that today we hoist the flag of anti-Bolshevism. But this is our old flag.

But we were born under that sign, but we have waged war against that enemy and we conquered him by means of our sacrifices and our blood.

Because what is known as Bolshevism or Communism does not date from today, pay attention to what I say, and it is not today but a State super-Capitalism elevated to its most fierce expression: it is not, therefore, a negation of the system but the continuation and the sublimation of that system. And it is high time to end placing in contrast Fascism and Democracy. It can truly be said that this great Italy of ours is also the great unknown.

We are not the embalmers of a past, we anticipate the future

If many of these ministers, members of Parliament and people of the same kind who speak on hearsay, would decide at last to cross the Italian frontier, they would be convinced that if a country does exist where true Democracy has been realized, that country is Fascist Italy. Because we, O Reactionaries of all the countries, real and authentic Reactionaries of all the countries, we are not the embalmers of a past: we anticipate the future.

We do not extend to the extreme limits the capitalistic civilization, above all in its mechanical aspect, almost anti-human, we created a new synthesis and through Fascism we open the door for the human and true civilization of labour.

Italy is an Island in the Mediterranean

So far I have dealt with the Continent. But Italy is as island. Italians must gradually acquire an insular mentality because this is the only way to place on the right level the questions relating to the naval defence of the nation.

Italy is an island that emerges in the Mediterranean.

This sea (I here also speak to the British who perhaps at this moment are listening on the wireless), this sea for Great Britain is a route, one

of the many routes, rather a short-cut, through which the British Empire can reach more rapidly the territories at its circumference. It may be said incidentally that when an Italian, Negrelli, planned the cutting of the Isthmus of Suez, more than anywhere else he was considered a madman in England.

The Mediterranean is a road for the others, for Italy it is life

If for others the Mediterranean is a route, for us Italians it is life.

We said a thousand times and I repeat before this magnificent crowd, that we do not intend to threaten this route. We do not propose to interrupt it, but we expect on the other hand that also our vital rights and interests be respected. There are no alternatives: it is necessary that the thinking minds in the British Empire should realize that the fact is accomplished and irrevocable. The sooner the better. A bilateral clash is not to be thought of and much less a clash that from being bilateral would immediately become European.

Consequently there is only one solution: a sincere, rapid and complete agreement based on the recognition of reciprocal interests.

But if it were otherwise; if truly, a thing that I exclude from today, it is contemplated to choke the life of the Italian people in that sea which was Rome's, well then, let it be known that the Italian people would jump up like one man (Cries of Yes!

Yes!) ready for combat with a decision that would have few precedents in history.

Armed peace

Milanese Comrades let us turn to ourselves. The orders of march for the XV. Year are the following: peace with everyone, with those near and far, but armed peace.

Hence our programme of armaments in the sky, in the sea and on land will be regularly developed.

The productive energies of the Nation will be speeded up in the fields of agriculture and industry. The corporative system will be continued until its definitive realization.

But there is an order that I will entrust to you, O Milanese of this most ardent and most Fascist Milan that revealed in these days its great soul, that I will entrust to you, O Milanese of this generous laborious and infatigable Milan. This order, which I feel sure will become to you at the same time that I pronounce it an imperative duty, is that you should place yourselves as you will do, at the vanguard for the exploitation of the Empire in order to render it, in the shortest possible time, an element of welfare, power and glory for the country.

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